

3R-00-R4

Reverend Louis Coleman
Justice Resource Center
Louisville, Kentucky 40202
June 6, 2000

President William Jefferson Clinton
White House
Washington, D.C.

Re: Environmental Discrimination in Louisville, Kentucky

Dear President Clinton,

For the past eight months, the Justice Resource Center has been involved in an on-going peaceful demonstration against what we perceive as overt environmental discrimination against the African-American community of West Louisville. The current focus of our activities is the Metropolitan Sewer District ("MSD"), a unit of municipal government that is completely insensitive to its impact on the local community. We have written to the Kentucky Natural Resources Cabinet, The Environmental Protection Agency, Region IV and to the Office of the Kentucky Attorney General to no avail.

For decades the Metropolitan Sewer District has been dumping untreated sludge in a brick-lined pit in the West End of Louisville. Over the past eight months we have repeatedly asked for groundwater monitoring of the area around the pit in order to ascertain whether groundwater and surfacewater are being impacted by what we believe is a practice that fails to meet minimum technological requirements for the disposal of sludge. The sewer authority has refused to accede to our simplest request and we have not even received a response to our application for groundwater monitoring results. We have further called for the sewer authority to address odors from the facility that permeate our community day and night. This is the only sewage treatment plant to serve the entire Jefferson County area. In this regard, the sewer authority has also been completely unresponsive.

Last year the sewer authority indicated that they would build another sewage treatment plant so that one community would not have to bear the burden for the entire county. Instead of building a new sewage treatment plant, this year MSD proposes to build a sludge pelletization plant next to the sewage treatment plant. The determination to build a sludge pelletization plant in the West End of Louisville was made without any public hearing or input from the impacted community.

MSD recently went to court to prevent our daily protests and they are threatening to jail us for protesting the daily dumping of sludge in an unlined pit in our community. This

community is already the recipient of 11 million pounds of air pollution a year from major rubber manufacturing facilities. Many of our residents have been poisoned at the cellular level with acrylnitrile from these facilities according to a recent study from the University of Louisville and we have the highest cancer rate in the entire state of Kentucky.

We are asking that you direct the initiation of an investigation into the compliance of the Metropolitan Sewer District and the Kentucky Natural Resources Cabinet with your Executive Order on Environmental Justice, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and the Clean Water Act. Furthermore, we request the participation of the Office of Environmental Justice and the United States Justice Department Divisions of Natural Resources and Civil Rights. Finally we ask that you visit the West End of Louisville in order to see for yourself the intolerable conditions that residents in the West End of Louisville contend with on a daily basis.

Very Truly Yours,



Reverend Louis Coleman

CC:

Ms. Anne Goode, Office of Environmental Justice
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
400 M Street, S.W.
Washington D. C. 20460

Ms. Carol Browner, Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20004

Ms. Vernice Miller-Travis,
Chair of the NEJAC Waste and Facility Siting Subcommittee

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